(c) if so, what are the views of Government on this development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) the Bill on Permanent Normal Trade Relations between the US and China has been approved by the US House of Representatives. The Bill is awaiting the approval of the US Senate. Several Senators have said that there may be delay in passage of the Bill in the Senate because of reports that appeared in the US media on China's continuing missile-related co-operation with Pakistan.

(c) Government does not comment on an ongoing legislative process in another country. Government has continued to bring to the notice of the US Administration its own assessment of nuclear and missile proliferation in our neighbourhood, including the continuing co-operation between Pakistan and China.

Safety of properties of Indians in Fiji

552. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI CM. IRBAHIM:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether following the coup staged against the Fijian Government in the capital of Fiji in which the Prime Minister and other were held as hostage for days and weeks, property of Indians in Fiji was looted;

(b) if so, whether this resulted in exodus of ethnic Indians of Fiji; and

(c) the number of such Indian refugees who have so far run away leaving their hearts and homes in Fiji and how many have come to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Yes, Sir. Some shops and other businesses belonging to ethnic Indians were looted in Suva on 19 May, 2000. Since then, there have been

reports of looting of houses of the ethnic Indians mostly in one province namely, Tailevu from where George Speight comes.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Strengthening of Indo-Israel relations

† 553. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Israel has offered cooperation in the field of advance technology, communications and other areas in order to strengthen the Indo-Israel relations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) The ongoing cooperation between India and Israel is multi-faceted and includes areas like trade, economy, investment, agriculture, tout ism, culture, science and technology etc. Possibilities for cooperation in other fields including information technology and communication are being explored.

Boosting of ties with Iran

554. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) what progress has been made to boost ties between India and Iran so far; and

(b) how Government propose to accelerate the pace of progress?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) India's relations with Iran that are rooted in history and based on cultural and civilisational affinities have witnessed all round progress.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.